



County of Los Angeles  
**CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE**

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May 21, 2007

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: David E. Janssen  
Chief Administrative Officer

**WASHINGTON, D.C. UPDATE**

**Immigration Reform**

On May 21, 2007, the Senate began floor debate on major immigration reform legislation on which a bipartisan compromise agreement was reached last week. As reported in the media, the agreement would provide for a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants who entered the country before January 1, 2007, allow undocumented high school graduates to become legal immigrants if they attend college or serve in the military (DREAM Act), establish the AgJOBS program which would legalize the status of certain undocumented agricultural workers, establish a new temporary (guest) worker program, increase border and interior enforcement of immigration laws, and reduce the admission of relatives of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents by replacing the current emphasis on family reunification with a new point system that rewards the employability of prospective immigrants.

The bill's enforcement provisions include increased Border Patrol and border fencing, the detention of all apprehended undocumented immigrants prior to deportation, and increased enforcement of employer sanctions against the hiring of undocumented workers, including through the use of an automated employment eligibility verification system, more effective use of Social Security information, and the issuance of fraud and tamper resistant Social Security cards.

Provisions in the bipartisan immigration reform package, which more directly affect the County, include:

- Authorization of \$400 million a year to reimburse state and local criminal justice system costs, such as prosecution, indigent defense, court, and autopsies, for undocumented criminal aliens;
- Authorization of such sums as may be necessary for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to take undocumented immigrants apprehended by state and local law enforcement officers into Federal custody and for training and equipment to assist states and localities performing immigration enforcement functions under an memorandum of understanding agreement;
- At the request of the head of a state or local law enforcement agency that apprehends or arrests an alien, requires the DHS Secretary to verify immigration status, take an undocumented immigrant into Federal custody, or request that the state or locality temporarily detain the person to a location for transfer to Federal custody and reimburse states and localities for their transportation, detention, and emergency medical costs incurred prior to transfer to Federal custody. The bill authorizes \$850 million a year for such reimbursement;
- Expanded use of automated fingerprint identification data to identify deportable criminal aliens; and
- Establishment of a new State Impact Assistance Grant (SIAG), financed by impact assistance fees paid by former undocumented immigrants granted legal status and temporary foreign workers, which would help states and localities to provide health and education services to non-citizens.

Except for the fee-financed SIAG, all of the other authorized financial assistance to state and local governments cited above would be subject to available annual appropriations. Similar to last year's immigration reform legislation, numerous Senate floor amendments will be offered. The prospects for enactment of immigration reform are highly uncertain due to divisions over whether there should be a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants or, amnesty in the view of others, more temporary (guest) workers, or a de-emphasis on current family reunification immigration policies.

#### **Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2008 Budget Resolution**

On May 17, 2007, Congress approved S. Con. Res. 21, FFY 2008 Budget Resolution by a vote of 214 to 209 in the House and 52 to 40 in the Senate. The budget resolution sets spending and revenue targets to guide future congressional action on fiscal legislation. It includes a total of \$954.1 billion for overall FFY 2008 discretionary spending, excluding \$145.2 billion in emergency funding for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. When an additional \$2.0 billion in advance FFY 2009 appropriations is counted, the budget resolution provides a total of \$23 billion more discretionary spending than the President has

requested, an increase for non-defense spending of 3.1 percent over the current year, adjusted for inflation. The Bush Administration has threatened to veto any FFY 2008 appropriations legislation which exceeds the amount requested by the President.

The budget resolution assumes a very small \$750 million reduction in mandatory (entitlement) spending over five years, which would come from programs under the jurisdiction of the House Education and Labor Committee and Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. It includes a deficit-neutral reserve fund to increase funding by up to \$50 billion over five years for the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), which must be reauthorized. However, under its "pay-as-you go" budget rules, any increase in SCHIP or other mandatory spending must be offset by a corresponding amount of spending cuts or revenue increases.

#### **Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) Authorization (H.R. 1495)**

On May 16, 2007, the Senate passed, 91 to 4, the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) reauthorization bill (H.R. 1495), which authorizes funding for the Army Corps of Engineers ("Corps") to conduct water resource studies and carry out specific projects and programs, such as navigation improvement, flood control, watershed management, shoreline protection, and environmental restoration. The next step is for a conference committee to be convened to reconcile differences with the WRDA reauthorization bill passed, 394 to 25, by the House on April 19, 2007.

The Senate bill includes an authorization for the Nicholas Canyon Bluffs project that was requested by the County's Department of Beaches and Harbors (DBH). The House version authorizes studies of improvements of the Ballona Lagoon Tides Gates and Dockweiler Bluffs, as requested by DBH. Both bills also authorize funding, subject to available appropriations, for the Corps to conduct a feasibility study to revitalize the Los Angeles River. The feasibility study would explore opportunities for environmental ecosystem restoration, flood control, and recreation in a manner consistent with the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan. The Senate bill authorizes \$25 million for this study while the House version authorizes \$20 million.

The Administration has threatened to veto H.R. 1495 because of its concern about the "excessive" total cost of the projects authorized by the bill. The bill's sponsors, including Senator Boxer who authored the Senate measure, counter that the high costs are due to the fact that WRDA has not been reauthorized since 2000. H.R. 1495 passed both houses by large margins which suggests that a Presidential veto could be overridden.

#### **Voter Confidence and Increased Accessibility Act (H.R. 811)**

On May 8, 2007, the House Administration Committee approved H.R. 811, the Voter Confidence and Increased Accessibility Act, by a 6 to 3 party line vote with Republicans opposing it. The bill requires that all voting equipment produce a voter verified paper ballot which would serve as the official ballot in any recount or audit. The measure also mandates that states set up special audit boards separate from existing voting administration systems

and requires that they carry out an audit of each Federal election by sampling select precincts for discrepancies between electronic vote counts and hand counts of the paper ballots.

As indicated in the March 21, 2007 Washington, D.C. update to your Board, the County opposes H.R. 811 because it would impose major unfunded election-related mandates on state and local governments, pre-empt state authority over the administration of elections, or which would impose administratively cumbersome or impractical election requirements relating to equipment, procedures, personnel, and implementation deadlines. While several amendments were offered during the committee mark-up of H.R. 811 which would have addressed many of our concerns, including a substitute amendment which would have delayed the implementation date of the bill, all of the amendments were defeated along party-lines.

#### **Pursuit of County Position**

**Preventive Medicine and Public Health Training Act:** On April 17, 2007, Senator Harkin (D-IA) introduced S. 1120, the Preventive Medicine and Public Health Training Act, which would establish a new Preventive Medicine and Public Health Training Grant Program to provide grants to train graduate medical residents in preventive medicine specialties. Public health departments, public or private hospitals, public health schools, and medical schools would be eligible to receive grants. The bill authorizes, subject to available appropriations, \$43 million in FFY 2008 and such sums as may be necessary in succeeding fiscal years.

The County's Department of Public Health indicates that the bill would fill a funding gap that currently exists in preventive medical residency training, which is important to public health because the specialty of preventive medicine is the nation's leading source of public health physicians. Based on the policy in the County's Federal Legislative Agenda to support proposals and funding which would increase the education, training, supply, recruitment, and retention of nurses, physicians, laboratory personnel, and other health professionals, **the County's Washington advocates will support S. 1120 or similar legislation which would fund the training of graduate medical residents in preventive medicine.**

We will continue to keep you advised.

DEJ:GK  
MAL:MT:hg

c: All Department Heads  
Legislative Strategist